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~~CIA~~ Fronting Harmful To Scholar Exchange

WHILE doing research and traveling in India last summer under the auspices of the U.S. Educational Foundation in India (Fulbright program) I was very surprised to be asked by a number of Indian intellectuals whether American students and scholars in India might not really be fronting for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The notion seemed to me ridiculous and I reassured them that this was a false rumor.

I ask now what the State Department and the CIA would have me write to those Indian scholars. Shall I write that our conversations about Indian philosophy, education and politics were indeed in good faith on my part at least? That I was not beholden to CIA funds (although, in fact, perhaps I was without my knowledge)? That I listened with an open mind and was not gathering information for an American espionage agency?

And if I do say so, apologizing for whatever deception must unfortunately have been practised upon them by some American students and scholars, what reason would they have to believe by present statements, since that is exactly what would now be said by a scholar who had already exploited his status as a university professor to stage, for the benefit of the CIA, supposedly above-board discussions?

The Fulbright program must have spent about \$4,000 on my travel and research. The benefit to me as a professor of philosophy has been enormous, but the main purpose of the program is cultural exchange. By my modest presence in India I was supposed to contribute something to Indian intellectual life, too. But the government which sent me there has, through its CIA operations, cancelled out any such possible benefit. Indeed, so far as Indian understanding and trust of American scholars, it would have been better had I and others never gone to India, if we were to be disgraced before the world six months later.

Now I see—and I hope that the American public and the Congress can see—better than last summer why the Indian parliament rejected Vice President Humphrey's apparently generous offer to assist Indian education in the amount of \$200 million and hundreds of American educators.

FORREST WILLIAMS,
Boulder, Professor, University of Colorado

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